

Project Summary

Please provide short answers to the following questions, summarising the information you have provided in the rest of the application form.

Please use full sentences and clear language. In case your project is accepted, the provided summary will be made public by the European Commission and the National Agencies.

Background: Why did you apply for this project? What are the needs you plan to address?

STARLIGHT intends to focus mainly on three aspects. The first refers to tourism sector condition. Despite Europe remains the n°1 tourism destination in the world, European tourism is confronted with many challenges, starting with the need to constantly innovate and improve quality. The sector must quickly adapt to the digital revolution and develop new attractive products in a sustainable manner for local communities and the environment. The challenge is today even more relevant, as the COVID19 emergency outbreaks in the world: the impact on the tourism sector is going to be severe and 2020 will remain a year the marks a change in how tourism is perceived and experienced. This situation implies that new skills, competences and knowledge will be needed, both for young professionals and for experienced operators. The second aspect refers to a lack of competences registered by tourism employers. In fact, they tend to report a shortage in applications from individuals with the necessary skills, particularly in relation to higher skilled and professional roles, in terms of a lack of “work-ready” graduates, often having undertaken courses that employers consider too theoretical or lacking practical work experience. There are skill shortages –and a lack of provision– in emerging areas, notably accessible tourism, that need to be addressed. The third aspect refers to light pollution, an environmental problem affecting ecosystems, biodiversity and natural life behaviour. In fact, light causes problems both to plants and animals (from birds, to reptiles, night predators, insects), living on cycles dictated by the sun and accustomed to the day and night rhythm and/or vulnerable to artificial light. The arrival of the powerful artificial light has negatively affected animal behaviour in mating, migration, sleeping, and hunting, with impacts also in reproduction and foraging for food. STARLIGHT would like to increase knowledge on this topic and increase awareness, contributing at the creation of public debate. In this aspect stands the innovation of this project: up to the partnership knowledge, there are no specific courses dedicated to dark sky observation as tourism asset, merging scientific popularisation on light pollution impacts and astronomy with skills and competence on tourist offers (experiential purchase and territorial/digital marketing). The project has an evident transnational added value: tourism is transnational and persons willing to operate in this sector need European (when not international) perspectives and mobility opportunities. Even if they work locally, they need to be able to understand tourists’ expectations and culture. Thus, undertaking a transnational training experience provides this possibility.

Objectives: What do you want to achieve by implementing the project?

STARLIGHT project aims at increasing job opportunities for young Europeans (18-30) with an education/training background in tourism and upskilling for already active operators in the tourism sector, identifying innovative sectors, in line with market trends and specifically the promotion of dark skies observation as a competitive asset for sustainable and experiential tourism. Despite the relevance of Europe as tourism destination, the impact of COVID-19 on the tourism sector has been severe and still in 2021 tourism will pay the consequences in terms of how it will be perceived and experiences. New elements will enter the scene and tourism offers will need to be re-thought, to improve the perception of “safe tourism” and respond to a decrease of “mass tourism”. Thus, new skills, competences and knowledge will be needed, both for young professionals and for experienced operators. STARLIGHT and its partnership covering 6 European countries (Italy, Spain, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Austria and Germany) will involve 60 participants to learn scientific notions on astronomy, biodiversity and light pollution, then they will be asked to attend Webinars, participate to a hackathon to produce an innovative business, build an experience boxes to be sold to tourists and, finally learn how to tell the story of our skies and transform this into a job opportunity. STARLIGHT also intends to reply to main challenges in the recruitment system, ensuring that VET courses remain relevant to rapidly changing employer’s needs, among which there is a need for innovative and flexible forms of training to meet the skill needs of SMEs and family-run businesses, representing a high % of tourism sector. This is an attempt to reply to the lack of practical and “work-ready” skills for many applicants to higher skilled and professional roles. STARLIGHT will respond to these challenges, providing a training methodology based on a work-based experience, focusing on topics such as accessible/sustainable tourism, digital marketing, business planning, etc. Finally, STARLIGHT intends to support a positive transformation of tourism, creating greener and more sustainable holidays through the conception of Astrotourism. The project will provide a small contribution for a possible scenario for the short-medium period: a mostly proximity tourism centered on some fixed

points, such as security (with particular attention to hygiene rules); nature, space and no crowding. Someone has defined this transition from overtourism to undertourism. To reach the above-mentioned objectives, the project will address two specific target groups: 1. Young Europeans accessing the market with an education/training background in tourism (primary target group). The minimum level is high school graduation or VET qualification in sectors that belong to the tourism value chain (guides, hotel managers, tour operators, tour managers, etc.) 2. Tourist operators already active in the sector. They can be entrepreneurs, employees, freelance, etc. The economic sectors include: 1) Accommodation 2) Gastronomy 3) Travel and tours 4) Destination management 5) Guiding and experience making. They will both be involved in all activities of the project, from training to dissemination and sustainability.

Implementation: What activities are you going to implement?

STARLIGHT activities will focus on the production of three project results: - training material toolkit, to set up a comprehensive knowledge base to be used as learning material and inform on three dimensions affected by light pollution (astronomy, biodiversity, health and wellbeing, cultural and historic value of dark skies observation, entrepreneurship and career guidance); - webinars, to transform acquired knowledge into skills to operate on the market and engage the audience. They will be focuses on three main topics: i. scientific popularization on astronomy and biodiversity/nature preservation, with an explanation of the storytelling approach for scientific dissemination and tourist engagement; ii. Experiential Tourism, through case studies presentation/analysis; iii. entrepreneurship, territorial and digital marketing; - a summer school format, defining topics, methodologies, format agenda, etc. to convey competences through a transnational work-based learning experience and inspire participants, target groups, stakeholders, and larger public, passing the heritage of what STARLIGHT has initiated. These results will be applied during three training activities: - a summer school in Bulgaria, focused on entrepreneurship, digital marketing and customer care, experiential purchase, customer care, etc. This experience will provide a working guidance to be used in the future and tested in the following learning activities, supporting participants in building their own career; - a winter school in Italy, focused on territorial marketing, benefiting from economic operators' direct participation. This experience will lead to the development of a joint tourist experiential package (the Experience Box) using the guidance developed in the previous summer school, the story telling approach and, if possible, the STARLAB tool; - a spring school in Spain, focused on biodiversity preservation and environment protection from light pollution, benefiting of the participation of local guides. This experience will lead to the co-creation (via Living Lab approach) of a joint tourist experiential package using the guidance developed in the previous summer school. four multiplier events will be organized to show and disseminate project results and introduce training activities: - Dark skies and stargazing: new skills for new jobs in the tourism sector, in Slovenia; - STARLIGHT SUMMER SCHOOL: build your own career in Astrotourism, in Bulgaria; - STARLIGHT WINTER SCHOOL: Territorial Marketing Experience Box, in Italy; - STARLIGHT SPRING SCHOOL: Nature and Biodiversity Experience Box, in Spain.

Results: What project results and other outcomes do you expect your project to have?

STARLIGHT expected impacts are mainly on employability, but it also aims at being one of the (hopefully) many initiative trying to support the tourism sector after the COVID19 emergency, providing new skills, but also a "think tank" to redefine the tourism sector and shape it in a more sustainable way. Thus, STARLIGHT intends to respond to the above-mentioned challenges by providing a training methodology based on a work-based experience, focusing on topics such as accessible/sustainable tourism, digital marketing, business planning, etc., pairing them with what a Lonely Planet study considers a travel trend: across the planet, travelers are now seeking out the world's last-remaining dark skies where they can get a clear, unpolluted view of the stars. Sadly, visual access to the night sky has, over the past century, become increasingly rare. The approach applied by the project to achieve results, can be described with 3 key-words: INFORM, to make the target groups aware of the importance of the topics addressed and of the opportunities STARLIGHT offers. ENGAGE, meaning to actively involve STARLIGHT target groups in project activities. INSPIRE, that is "passing" the heritage of what STARLIGHT developed to others, so that they acknowledge it and make it their own. The implementation of this approach will ensure the achievement of the following expected results: - Provision of Knowledge, Competences, and Skills at least 50 young Europeans (tourism new graduates or in VET) able to better respond to the tourism market challenges and trends - creation of a stable intergenerational exchange and work-based learning opportunities through the involvement of at least 10 tourism operators (e.g., guides, SMEs, etc.) already active on the market but willing to undertake upskilling pathways. - Integration of "dark skies observation" as a learning outcome within mainstream courses for guides and tour operators - sensitization on light pollution impacts and environmental protections, leading to sustainable tourism approaches.

Applicant organisation/Partner organisation

OID	Legal name	Country	Region	City	Website
E10208875	ISTITUTO NAZIONALE DI ASTROFISICA	Italy		ROMA	www.inaf.it
E10045441	Gruppo Azione Locale Escartons e Valli Valdesi s.r.l	Italy	Piemonte	Luserna San Giovanni	www.evv.it
E10274512	FUNDACIÓN CAMINO LEBANIEGO	Spain	Cantabria	SANTANDER	
E10248891	Land Tirol - Tiroler Umwelthanwaltschaft	Austria	Tirol	Innsbruck	www.tiroler-umwelthanwaltschaft.gv.at
E10211609	KULTUR UND ARBEIT EV	Germany		BAD MERGENTHEIM	www.kultur-und-arbeit.de
E10116828	RRA SEVERNE PRIMORSKE REGIJSKA RAZVOJNA AGENCIJA DOO NOVA GORICA	Slovenia		NOVA GORICA	www.rra-sp.si
E10106886	National Business Development Network	Bulgaria	София (столица) (Sofia (stolitsa))	Sofia	www.nbdn-bg.org

Is the organisation a public body?

Is the organisation a non-profit?

Type of Organisation

Main sector of activity

Research Institute/Centre

Associated persons should not be shown in PDF because of GDPR compliance.